

CLAIMS

1. A method of sending at least one request (R) to a domain name server (1, 2, 3) from a requesting machine (H), said domain name server (1, 2, 3) being an

5 E.164.arpa telephone number domain name server and each name being determined from an E.164 format destination telephone number (NTEL) contained in said request (R), which method is characterized in that a prior test of the validity of the destination telephone number (NTEL) of

10 the request (R) is executed automatically and locally to the requesting machine (H) relative to a telephone number database (BD) local to the requesting machine (H) in order to forward the request (R) from the requesting machine (H) to the domain name server (1, 2, 3) only if

15 its destination telephone number (NTEL) passes said test.

2. A request-sending method according to claim 1, characterized in that at least one prescribed country code (CC) is stored in the local database (BD), and said

20 test includes verifying whether the country code (CC) of the destination telephone number (NTEL) of the request (R) is stored in the local database.

3. A request-sending method according to claim 1 or claim

25 2, characterized in that at least one numbering plan is stored in the local telephone number database (BD), the numbering plan or each numbering plan comprising at least one block (BN) of telephone numbers, and said test includes a step (E11) of determining whether the

30 destination telephone number (NTEL) of the request (R) belongs to a block of numbers (BN) of the numbering plan, the destination telephone number (NTEL) of the request (R) failing said test (E12) if the result of the determination step (E11) is a negative result.

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4. A request-sending method according to claim 3, characterized in that the numbering plan is associated

with a country code (CC) and the numbering plan corresponding to the country code of the destination telephone number (NTEL) of the request (R) is that in relation to which said test is effected.

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5. A request-sending method according to claim 3 or claim 4, characterized in that separate blocks of telephone numbers (BN) associated with respective prescribed characteristics (CAR) of numbers in the block are stored 10 in the local database (BD) and said determination step further comprises a step (E13) of determining to which block of telephone numbers (BN) in the local database (BD) the destination telephone number (NTEL) of the request (R) belongs, and if it is determined that the 15 destination telephone number (NTEL) of the request (R) belongs to a block (BN) of the numbering plan the characteristics (CAR) associated with the block (BN) thus determined are read (E14, E15) in the local database (BD), it is verified (E16) whether the destination 20 telephone number (NTEL) of the request (R) conforms to the characteristics (CAR) thus read, and the request (R) is forwarded (E18) from the requesting machine (H) to the domain name server (1, 2, 3) only if the verification result is a positive result.

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6. A request-sending method according to claim 5, characterized in that the characteristics (CAR) of the block numbers are at least one of the following:

- a date (Bres) of reservation of telephone numbers 30 of the block;
- an end (Eres) of a period of reservation of telephone numbers of the block;
- a date (Baff) of assignment of telephone numbers of the block;
- an end (Eaff) of a period of assignment of telephone numbers of the block;

- a date (Batt) of allocation of telephone numbers of the block (BN);
 - a date (Eatt) of ending allocation of telephone numbers of the block (BN);
- 5 · a maximum length (Lmax) of the telephone numbers of the block;
 - a minimum length (Lmin) of the telephone numbers of the block.
- 10 7. A request-sending method according to any preceding claim, characterized in that if the destination telephone number (NTEL) of the request (R) fails said test, a signal is sent to the requesting machine (H) to report an error in the destination telephone number (NTEL) of the request (R).
- 15 8. A request-sending method according to claim 7 and either claim 5 or claim 6, characterized in that the signal reporting the error in the destination telephone number of the request (R) contains information on the block number characteristic(s) (CAR) to which the destination telephone number (NTEL) of the request (R) does not conform at the time of said verification (E16).
- 20 9. A device for sending at least one request (R) to a domain name server (1, 2, 3) from a requesting machine (H), said domain name server (1, 2, 3) being an E.164.arpa telephone number domain name server and each name being determined from an E.164 format destination number (NTEL) contained in said request (R), which device is characterized in that it is local to the requesting machine (H) and includes means (DR) for receiving requests (R) from the requesting machine (H), a telephone number database (BD), means (DC) in the receiver means (DR) for automatically testing the validity of the destination telephone number (NTEL) of the request (R) against data from the telephone number
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database (BD), and means for forwarding the request (R) from the requesting machine (H) to the domain name server (1, 2, 3) only if the control means (DC) determine that its destination telephone number (NTEL) has passed said 5 validity test.

10. A request-sending device according to claim 9, characterized in that the receiver means (DR), the telephone number database (BD), the automatic control 10 means (DC), and the sending means (DE) are in the requesting machine (H).

15. A request-sending device according to claim 10, characterized in that the receiver means (DR), the automatic control means (DC), and the sending means (DE) are in the requesting machine (H) and the automatic control means (DC) can consult the telephone number database (BD) via a local area network (RL).

20. 12. A requesting machine including a device according to any one of claims 9 to 11 for sending at least one request.

25. 13. A computer program adapted to be stored on a data medium and including program instructions for executing the method according to any one of claims 1 to 8 of sending at least one request.

30. 14. A system comprising at least one E.164.arp a numbering domain name server (1, 2, 3) and a plurality of requesting machines (H) according to claim 12 adapted to send at least one request to said server(s) (1, 2, 3).